

WE WERE HERE (WE WERE QUEER)

ZINE: FIRST EDITION

THE EDGE OF
THE RAINBOW

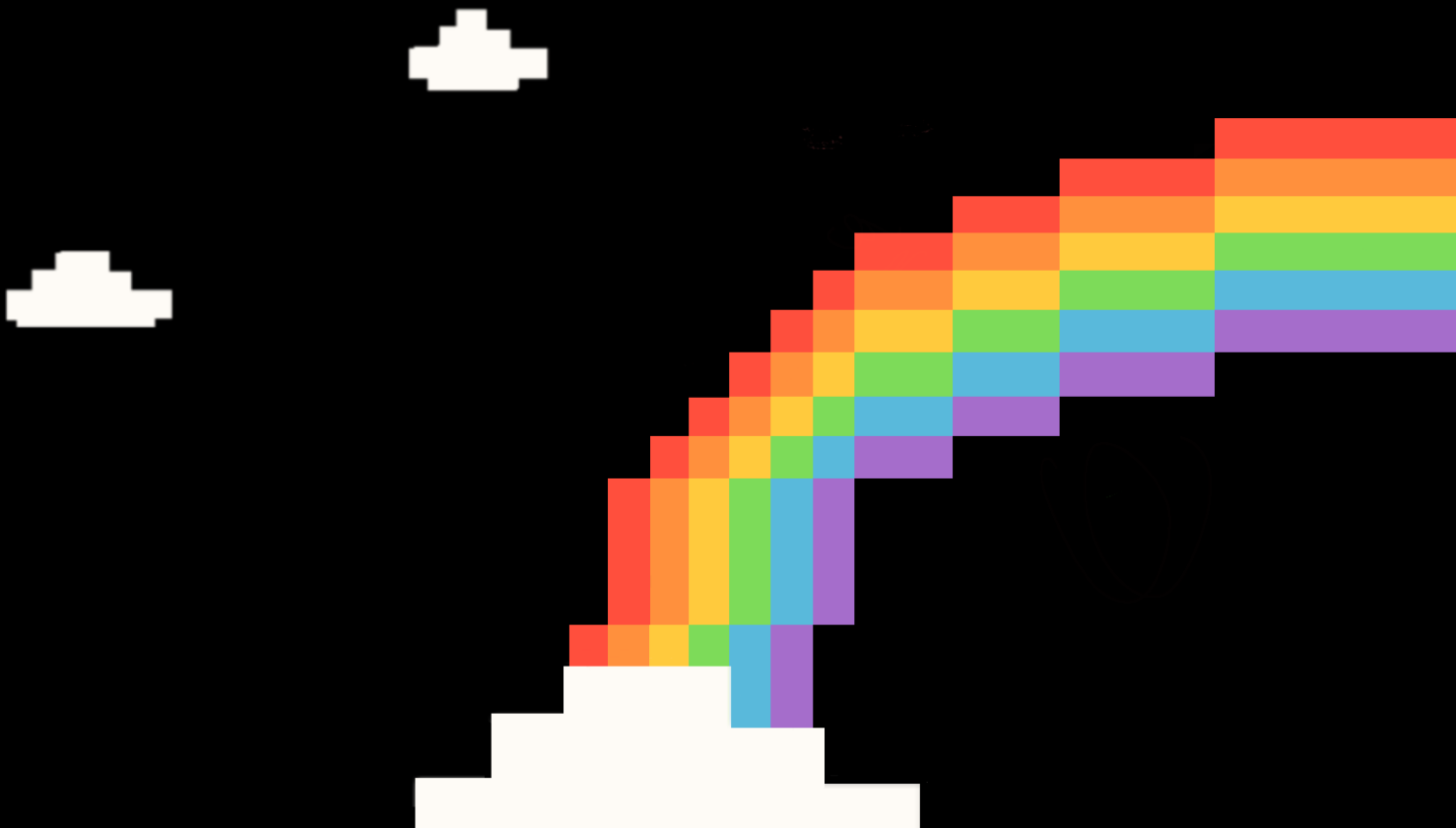


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LAND

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This zine exists on stolen land. We humbly acknowledge this fact. We acknowledge during Pride Month that we also inherit a legacy of shame, as we occupy this land still wet with the blood of its First Peoples.

Our zine is hosted and funded by a colonial institution situated in an illegal occupation, in a made-up province, in a made-up nation rich with stolen wealth. Our university is named after a beautiful river, the Stó:lō, whose colonial name is the Fraser River. The Fraser River was named after a racist colonizer and canoe thief. Our university occupies the lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, sə́lilwə́taʔt, ǵíćáý, kʷíkʷə́ləm, Qayqayt, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Tsawwassen Peoples, who have been displaced, persecuted, and oppressed by the government which funds us. There are approximately 30,000 students at SFU; around 3% identify as Indigenous, and they are surviving an education system designed to colonize and assimilate. They and their ancestors are survivors of an ongoing genocide. We acknowledge the shame of this history.

Our team and our contributors come from many cultures and histories. Some of us come from cultures struggling to survive colonization; Some of us come from cultures that were colonized long ago, and now struggle to remember our histories. Some of us come from cultures that embrace queerness; some of us come from cultures that were taught to fear queerness.

To be queer on this land is beautiful. We see this land which loved and honoured its two-spirit, Indigiqueer children, and we celebrate that love. We are proud of the Indigenous artists, poets, storytellers, and knowledge-keepers who have survived to be here and be queer.

Indigenous knowledge holds that it takes multiple generations to heal trauma. In the queer community, we measure generations not by births but by *rebirths*, as we continue to find ourselves and our chosen families. We are part of a long legacy of survival. As we walk proudly in the streets as an entire rainbow of 2SLGBTQIA+ (and more), we inherit the strength of the queers who came before us. We acknowledge the intersections of all of our identities.

We grieve together and stand together with our Indigenous friends, lovers, neighbours, and relatives. We acknowledge and celebrate you. We are grateful to share a rainbow with you.

With solidarity and in love.



LETTER FROM THE TEAM



Dear reader,

Whether you are queer, or simply here, welcome to our zine. We are happy you came to take a look at our first issue.

It is never an easy time or place to be queer, but this issue comes at a uniquely strange and difficult time. A global pandemic continues to shake our communities and highlight global inequity. Against a backdrop of social and political upheaval, systems are changing.

Among all this, queer and trans folks have created communities of resistance and solidarity. We have been loud and proud as we fight for our rights, and we have been both soft and strong as we support each other and grieve our losses. Every colour of the queer experience lives on and evolves in the hearts, minds and lives of 2SLGBTQIA+ people around the world.

This publication serves as a looking glass – a small window into our lived experiences in the here and now. Our contributors have shared their personal truth, liberation, and beauty in their works. What emerges is a spectrum of diverse and deeply personal pieces which we are proud and honoured to share.

A general content warning: while none of the pieces are overtly graphic, there are mentions of homophobia, dysphoria, heartbreak, rejection, alienation, blood, surgery, sex work, substance use, homelessness, colonialism, and racism.

To our readers and contributors:

Let this zine be a safe haven to find yourself in, in times of need. A virtual time capsule.

A manifesto.

We were here. We were queer.

With gratitude,

Alex, Anita, Constantin, Serena, Simran, Syd, Tiara
wwhwwq

THE EDGE OF THE RAINBOW

There is an outsider to every group, and an edge to every rainbow. In the first issue of our zine, we seek to explore why we feel awkward in the queer community or in the world as a whole. Why do we feel like outsiders, and why do we feel out of place in both the spaces meant to include and exclude us? **Why does the all-encompassing rainbow seem to have an edge?**



CHOOSE YOUR PLAYER

meet
the
team

constantin



Constantin (they/them) is a disabled bastard man, writing sad emo poems about survival, abuse, and unreality.

tiara



Tiara (she/her) is a social psychology student. Her life work centers around her identity as a proud queer Black woman with Indigenous heritage & Indian roots.

anita



Anita (they/他) is an ocean breeze on a hot sunny day. Yarrow (she/它) is a wild little mutt. They run sfu poetry club.

syd



Syd (they/them or she/her) is a nonbinary pansexual queer who writes to clear their mind and clears their mind to write.

serena



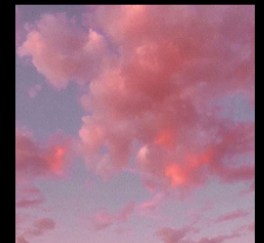
Serena (she/they) is a constantly questioning queer disabled person. They love reading, art and starting paintings, but never finishing them.

alex



Alex Masse is a writer/musician residing in what is colonially known as BC. As a neurodiverse lesbian, their identities greatly affect their work.

simran



simran (she/her) loves reading, writing, and going on long walks while listening to music, looking for forget me nots on the side of the road.

YOU HAVE CHOSEN WJHWJWJ: THE EDGE
OF THE RAINBOW. READY TO PLAY?

LOADING...



COMING OUT BY ANITA SHEN

Anita (沈霁) is terrible
at video games, and
always falls off the edge
of Rainbow Road in Mario
Kart. They love bright
colours and feeding
crows.

coming out is shit
coming out is struggle
coming out is an art, a journey, a dissection:
messy,
yet exhaustively managed

like emergency response, the first step
is to check for danger:
always,
always scan your surroundings
for comments, sneers, little burrs of hate,
live electrical wires of bigotry
that signal to retreat
or don safety gear

like performance, the second step
is creating a frame,
dressing the part, setting the stage, setting up the punchline,
the big reveal;
trying to know your audience
and anticipating both
roses and tomatoes

like surgery, the third step
is staying laser focused on truth,
because you cannot lose your credibility:
hands cannot shake, voice cannot tremble.
you must have the right tools
and command the theatre

like prayer, the fourth step
is to build a nest of hope
to always do this work with love
and to remember every day to be grateful:
hold it, savor it

because though
coming out is a constant process,
every time it holds power.

DISILLUSION

BY K

K (all pronouns) is a non-binary bio student who is an aspiring behavioural neuro.

i don't know her
as far as the eye can
see, she doesn't exist

i can prove it
echoes can't hold lines
to the sun, cast no shadow

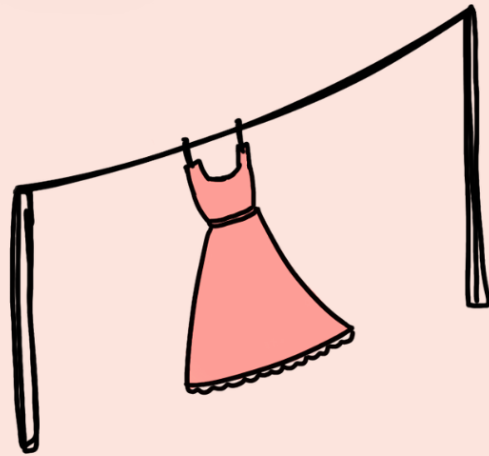
so, soft lumps of flesh
one million bloody eggs
our act is over

she doesn't exist
she never has
but they saw her

sewed inside seed(s)
she took route, sucking weed
tickled pink

there she hung
our clothesline stage
dress, open curtain

there were no lights,
still they clapped
enamel on skin

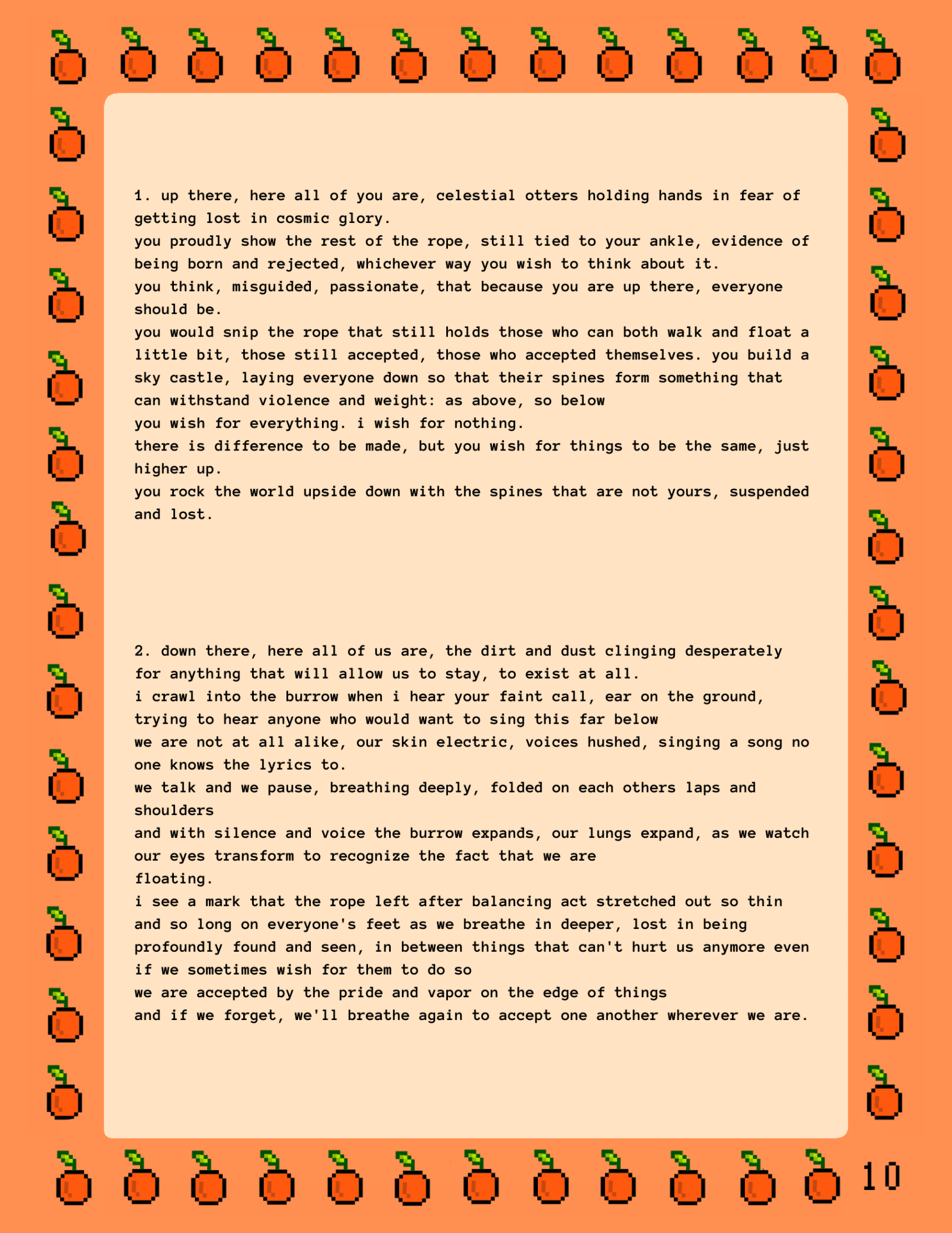




IN BETWEEN BY CONSTANTIN

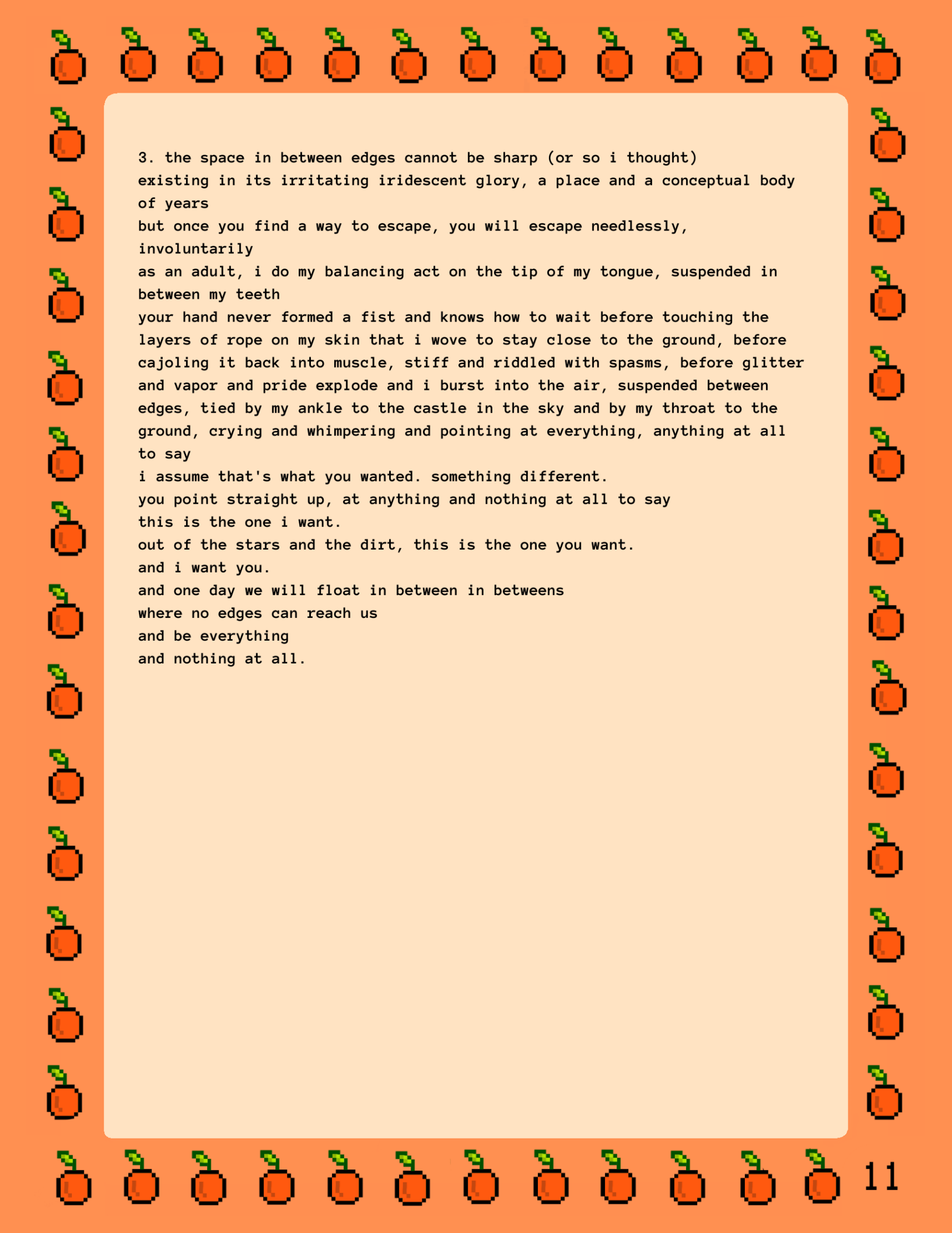
Constantin
(they/them) is a
disabled bastard
man, writing sad emo
poems about
survival, abuse, and
unreality.

0. vapor, pride, and queerness do not have an edge (or so i thought)
existing in their irritating iridescent glory, a concept and a gaseous body
of years
but if a line has an edge, a curve will find one soon
as a child, i wanted to be a circus performer, for no queer reason at all
a balancing act, suspended high in the air, in between anything that wished
for an in between
staged and clipped to a rope between the drying poles, the third pole raised
in waiting
an edge can cut, sure. but even a spoon could be a deadly weapon if it wished
for it
a slap with an open hand may not perfectly equal a fist, with blood vessels
exposed and singing in reds, blues, and purples, but it nevertheless exists,
suspended between the gazes of the audience that wishes it could be something
different.
i assume that's what you wanted. something different.
give me a point, and i will rock the world upside down. in a pinch, a spine
will do, strong as steel and a bundle of field grass hugged together,
unbreakable, even if you wish for it not to do so.
i do not wish for anything. there is no difference to be made.
to feel is to differ. taking away the feeling is hard, but not impossible, a
body of years never finished. you can sever the umbilical cord wrapped around
your ankle and float upwards, into the vapor, body of years rejected, a rope
for an anchor never made, never woven.
a rope tied in passion is better than the rope tied in restraint, however
misguided it might be.



1. up there, here all of you are, celestial otters holding hands in fear of getting lost in cosmic glory.
you proudly show the rest of the rope, still tied to your ankle, evidence of being born and rejected, whichever way you wish to think about it.
you think, misguided, passionate, that because you are up there, everyone should be.
you would snip the rope that still holds those who can both walk and float a little bit, those still accepted, those who accepted themselves. you build a sky castle, laying everyone down so that their spines form something that can withstand violence and weight: as above, so below
you wish for everything. i wish for nothing.
there is difference to be made, but you wish for things to be the same, just higher up.
you rock the world upside down with the spines that are not yours, suspended and lost.

2. down there, here all of us are, the dirt and dust clinging desperately for anything that will allow us to stay, to exist at all.
i crawl into the burrow when i hear your faint call, ear on the ground, trying to hear anyone who would want to sing this far below
we are not at all alike, our skin electric, voices hushed, singing a song no one knows the lyrics to.
we talk and we pause, breathing deeply, folded on each others laps and shoulders
and with silence and voice the burrow expands, our lungs expand, as we watch our eyes transform to recognize the fact that we are floating.
i see a mark that the rope left after balancing act stretched out so thin and so long on everyone's feet as we breathe in deeper, lost in being profoundly found and seen, in between things that can't hurt us anymore even if we sometimes wish for them to do so
we are accepted by the pride and vapor on the edge of things
and if we forget, we'll breathe again to accept one another wherever we are.



3. the space in between edges cannot be sharp (or so i thought)
existing in its irritating iridescent glory, a place and a conceptual body
of years
but once you find a way to escape, you will escape needlessly,
involuntarily
as an adult, i do my balancing act on the tip of my tongue, suspended in
between my teeth
your hand never formed a fist and knows how to wait before touching the
layers of rope on my skin that i wove to stay close to the ground, before
cajoling it back into muscle, stiff and riddled with spasms, before glitter
and vapor and pride explode and i burst into the air, suspended between
edges, tied by my ankle to the castle in the sky and by my throat to the
ground, crying and whimpering and pointing at everything, anything at all
to say
i assume that's what you wanted. something different.
you point straight up, at anything and nothing at all to say
this is the one i want.
out of the stars and the dirt, this is the one you want.
and i want you.
and one day we will float in between in between
where no edges can reach us
and be everything
and nothing at all.

ART PIECE

BY MINAHILL NASIR

Minahill Nasir (she/her/hers) is currently a third year cognitive science student at SFU. She takes great joy in combining mathematics with natural and social sciences. Her mixed academic background plays a crucial role in the development of her pieces.



image description

An intricately detailed pencil crayon drawing, full of colours, but prominently featuring purple and brown. On the left, there is a person sitting under a tree with their legs crossed and reading a book. They have short brown hair, a pink shirt, blue pants, and a belt with a large pink buckle shaped like the letter 'G'. They are sitting at the base of a large tree, and to the right of this tree are three more trees with intricate bark and leaves. At the base of each tree are purple and red flowers and green clover. There is a rainbow flowing like a stream at the bottom of the page. At the top of the page, the sun is shining behind clouds and distant fir trees, and on the left, there is a yellow brick fountain, and on the right a purple geometric shape.

ELEGY IN FOUR PARTS SET TO MEDITERRANEAN SUN

BY HELEN HAN WEI LUO

Helen Han Wei Luo is an emerging Chinese-Canadian writer and philosophy student based in Vancouver, specializing in value theory. Her work has previously been longlisted for the CBC Literary Prizes in both the short story and non-fiction sections, and published in Plenitude Magazine and PRISM International. She can be found on [instagram @oceanialuo](#).

I.

that tangy summer in Valencia. underneath patios
we ate small bowls of roasted pumpkin seeds with white wine,
taggiasca olives. caramelized polenta with lemon
and rosemary. Ianthe and Iphus
are our

/guests

/flitting

/through flesh shadows cast

though it remains true

/through bodies serpentine with longing

the kissing here is more bountiful *I*
than wheat fields *lived*

of Veneto. I am starving *so*
(for touch, for corporeality) *bloodlessly*

Leave a door open *these*

for wandering hungry ghosts *last*

like me. *moments*



II.

/when you are done with dinner/
come/be a little hummingbird/
/fluttering/with me/through the forest/
with just/a mischievous little tongue
/and all the wetness of hazy June clouds/

I am sorry I never told you this. I was staring at the fireflies
lighting your cheeks. dandelion hollows. I will love you
even if there is no space. if there are no rooms in the Shangri-La
overlooking the Tuscan Mediterranean, we will take
a ferry to Athens as tangerine-bellied orioles. hide from
the sharp-taloned cardinals of Roma.
I mean this. I'll find us a way.

III.

*on dit aux femmes que les hommes sont toujours sincères;
qu'ils changent de sincérité, c'est tout.* I am not a woman,
though I confess I would become one for you. I would
curl on my perch and peck at my feathers
till I was perforated enough. In the Zhuangzi
the amorphous Hundun dies after being prodded
with seven holes, carving his cosmic body
into the humanesque. I would do that for you
prick and pluck

and puncture*/*and pray*/*and punish*/*and prostitute*/*and plague

till the featherless biped emerged from the Aegean,
and I am woman enough for you.



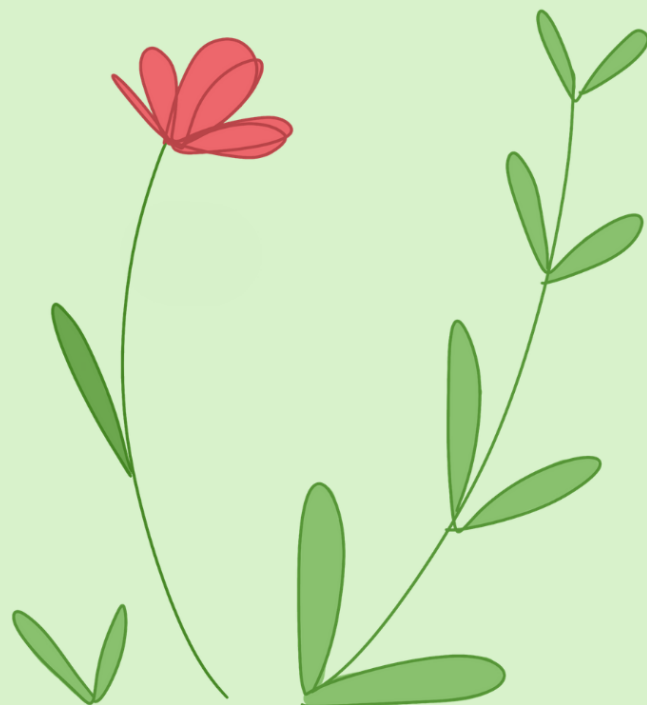
IV.

I knew this too late. that even the smallest iridescent insect
will struggle for life. that struggle is not enough. that love
does not protect you. *that the Venetian latticework grid, too,*
whimpers at the smell of flood. warm coriander and taleggio
crashes to the shore, a soporific, saline wave. that we will soon run out
of peacock coastlines. no, enough of this, because even now, between two
lilac plumaged starlings gripping the shadbush branch,
wingspans entangled with *that Mediterranean sun,*
whistles echo with the horror
that love is not
enough.

ALIENS IN LOVE

BY KITTY CHEUNG

Kitty Cheung (she/her) is an illustrator living and creating on ancestral Coast Salish lands. Interested in stories overlapping queerness, cultural identity, and mental health, the presence of aliens in her work conveys a sense of otherness or a lack of belonging. For people who sometimes feel alien, she hopes her illustrations help to reimagine and transform this feeling into one of vibrant joy and unapologetic confidence.

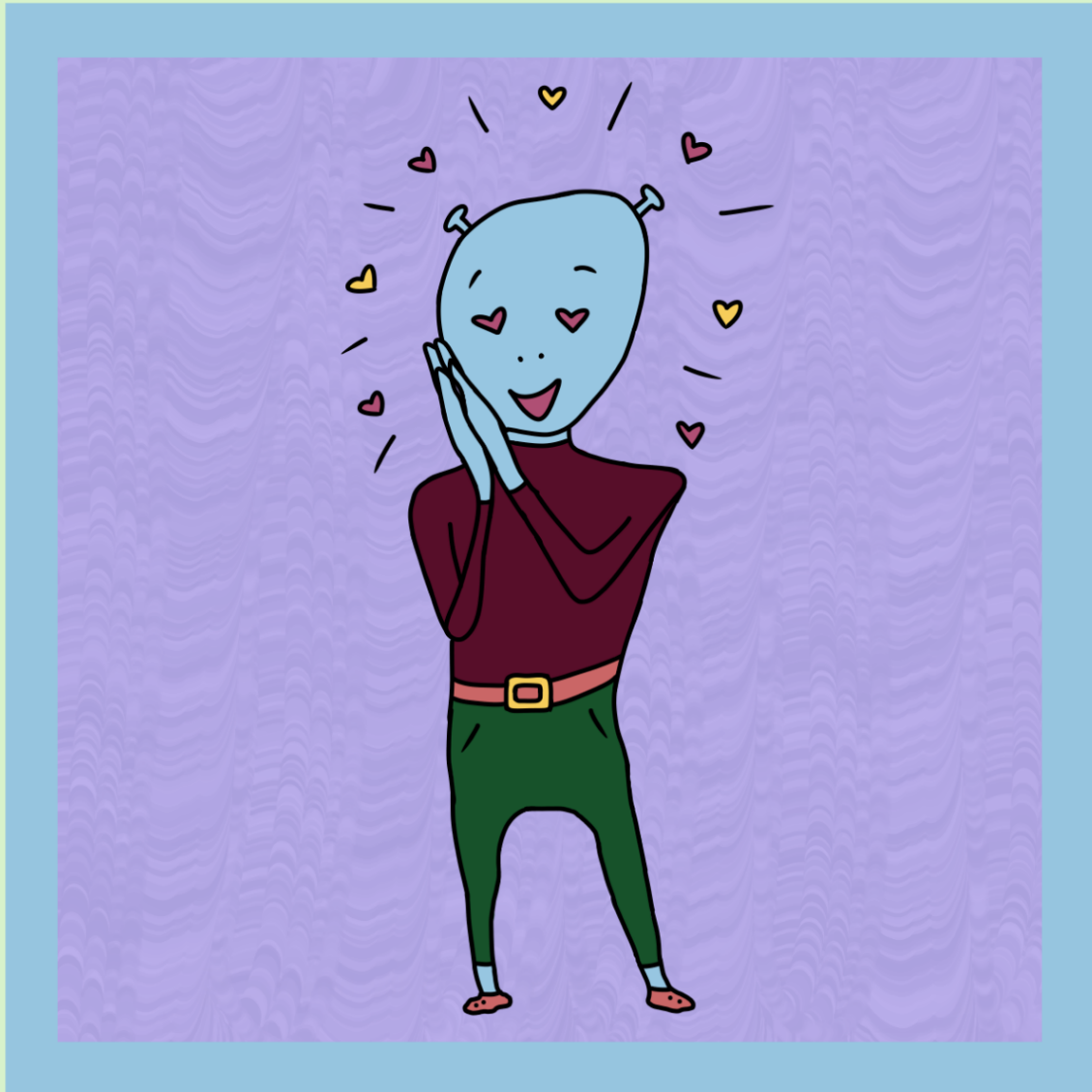


DGLING



Image description: An adorable cartoon digital drawing of an alien. The turquoise alien sits at a table, where there rests a plate of food blobs that are orange, pink, and blue, and a drink with a silly curved straw and a lightning bolt on the cup. The alien's face is resting on their hands, elbows on the table, as they look into the distance lovingly with four pink hearts floating around their head. The background is light green, and the table is dark green.

PAM, TAKE NOTE



A digital drawing of a cartoon alien. The alien is standing up and holding their clasped hands near their face, smiling and utterly smitten, their eyes two cartoon hearts, with more yellow and pink hearts, and dashes around their head. Their skin is light-blue and they are wearing a burgundy turtleneck and stylish green pants with a pink belt and matching pink shoes. The background is light purple with a wavy texture to it.

PARADISE

LOST

BY SYD



Syd (they/them or she/her) is a nonbinary pansexual queer who writes to clear their mind and clears their mind to write.

this is a song! listen here:



youtu.be/pEzLEAuATs

Your Rose coloured glasses and my
Rosary masses and our
Sunday evenings
School yard

Bodies concealed by a
Dandelion field, I said
Lay me down,
I'm avant-garde

But I was lost
I was lost
You were my compass
I was your cross

I was lost
I was lost
I was your heaven
Your Pentecost

The board game pieces of our,
Love and caprices, we were
Jacks, dice,
A fragile house of cards

Me without my mind, and
you were not so blind,
We danced
Always a step too far.

But I was lost
I was lost
You were my compass
I was your cross

I was lost
I was lost
I was your heaven
Your Pentecost

And I'm lost
I'm still lost
You turned your back on me
Paradise Lost

THE EDGE OF THE RAINBOW

BY MINAHILL NASIR

Categorization, concepts, and stereotypes. They are all useful shortcuts we use.

As infants, we learn concepts; some say by taking some experience and then applying it onto our innate framework. Then, the categories that come to the front of our mind are the ones where things are the most alike, but also the most different.

Then, we settle. We may never look for a better way to develop that concept. We develop it once and never look back again.

Stereotypes are concepts that we learn about people; we try understanding people as though they are inanimate.

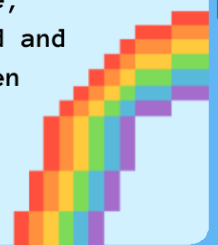
Because our pull towards becoming a sloth means us using these shortcuts of categorization more and more often, stereotyping is inevitable.

Therein lies the problem; humans are dynamic, animate, and constantly under pressure to metamorphose into something or the other.

People are unable to sort humans into concepts, yet we still attempt to and then we proceed to never dismantle any groupings we have made.

There will always be at least one person being the exception to the rule, and in the case that there are always exceptions then it might be time to declare that the rule is broken.

It's only natural that the edge of the rainbow feels uncomfortable, awkward, excluded, and almost isolated there; it's barely included and could be attributed to being a part of the sky instead at any given moment.





I DO NOT KNOW LOVE

BY TIARA CASH

Tiara A. Cash (she/her) – writer, researcher, and poet – is an Equitable Mindfulness practitioner who encourages “real” conversations and deep dives through her work at Crowned Vitta LLC. Through her Ex(SEL) lens, she hopes to use mindful art to bring those of us who reside in the margins together to celebrate our collective identities in work centered on solidarity, equity, and liberation.

I do not know love. I've never had the
Experience of seeing it in someone else.

But I can only imagine what it tastes like, what it feels like. . .how it
sounds.

Love must be like the moment I hear my favorite song

From my favorite playlist as I open the window on a cool autumn day feeling
the wind's hello brushing my cheek.

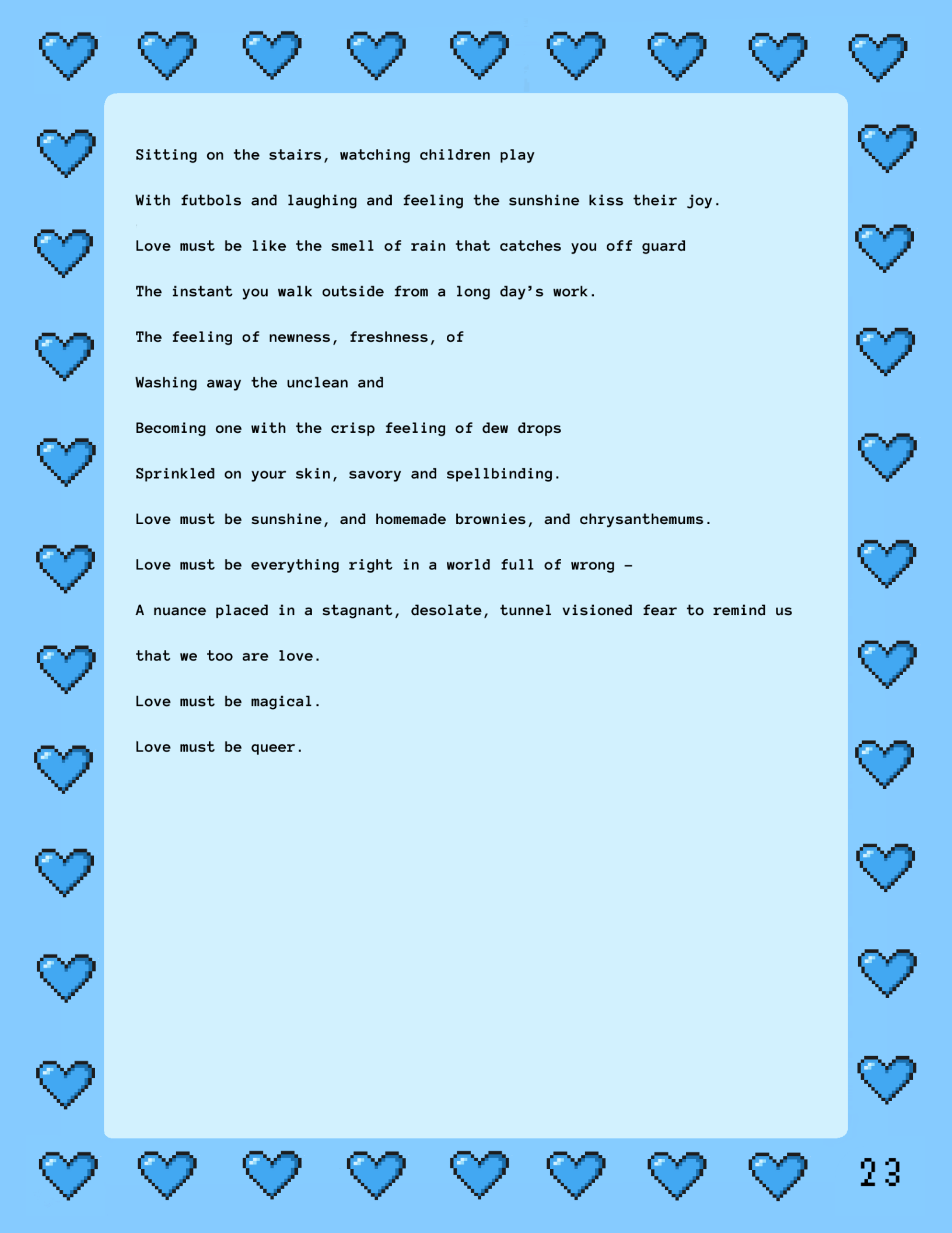
Love must be like the smile that can't be stopped

When I see cows or the moon on a long drive

Knowing too, I am in passing – a moment of glory

And beauty housed here for just a little while before moving on.

Love must be like the first taste of gelato in Rome, Italy near the pantheon.



Sitting on the stairs, watching children play

With futbols and laughing and feeling the sunshine kiss their joy.

Love must be like the smell of rain that catches you off guard

The instant you walk outside from a long day's work.

The feeling of newness, freshness, of

Washing away the unclean and

Becoming one with the crisp feeling of dew drops

Sprinkled on your skin, savory and spellbinding.

Love must be sunshine, and homemade brownies, and chrysanthemums.

Love must be everything right in a world full of wrong -

A nuance placed in a stagnant, desolate, tunnel visioned fear to remind us

that we too are love.

Love must be magical.

Love must be queer.

SUNSPINE

BY VICTORIA BELWAY

Victoria Belway (she/her) is a behavioural neuroscience student at SFU. She considers herself neurodiverse and hopes to highlight how internalized homophobia can be exacerbated by anxiety through her work.

i tried to catch pools of sun in my hands
and dip my head in sunbleach.
i won't look at you, i promise - i know it won't be good for me,
i won't think of your milky fingertips grazing rolling hills of skin
or hairs standing up on the back of your neck
while i breathe down your chest,
a warm fog building in your lungs.

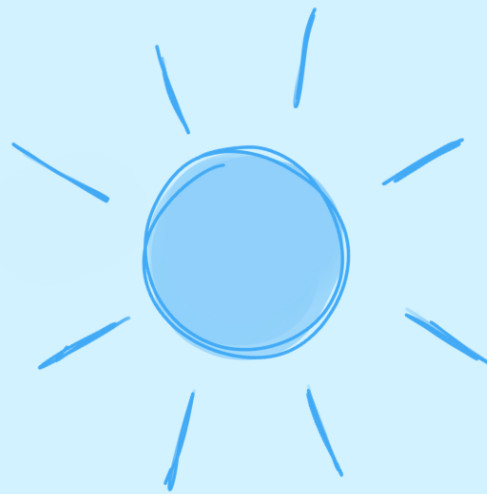
She slowly drowns in my touch, but i am the one feeling suffocated.

i want to beg for attention
just like how the sky sobs so messy in the morning.
She probably hates the bad weather,
probably waits for the sun to come out,
but that just makes me cry even harder.
i think it's okay, the rain.
maybe my glasses fog up and i can't see what's right in front of me,
but it washes the dirt off my shoes
and that's when i truly feel clean
maybe i just need to find someone who knows what i mean.

maybe i need someone who will let me speak first
even though i'm lying when i say i'm good with words;
the truth is i rehearse every single thought
i follow Her blank script
regurgitated as if said by somebody else.
now nobody can spit on who i really am
nobody can tell me that i'm ugly because i'm never really there
i am a shadow of myself
and She is the Sun.

it was such an ugly monday
your clothes glued to your frozen skin -
that wool looked itchy
like the fibres were hooking their nails into your chest
did it hurt to undress that night?
as your clothes peeled off your body
like a slim, sweet layer of honey binds you to a shell,
a nettling breeze nudged at the brim of your hips

The Loneliness loves you well, doesn't she?
I hope you know that she is My shadow.



THE PEN THAT FINALLY BLED

BY MAYA BEN

Maya Ben (she/her) is a poet, athlete, avid TedTalk watcher, and first-year student at Simon Fraser University. When she is not writing about various social issues, you can find her buying new books, completely neglecting the ones sitting on her bookshelf that she has yet to read.

i have this gift
enigmatic, like a rainbow
you see, words would flow out of me with ease
trickling new ideas, inspiration
resulting in words that
i have bled onto hundreds of pages--

but my pen pauses at the thought of you,
devastating drought ensues

the ink would suddenly dry,
me, invisible river in my eyes,

superficially wondering, *why?*

treading the edge of
my enigmatic gift
this phenomenon, my rainbow

knowing the answer to the question
i was too afraid to utter aloud

pushing away
how poetic it would be
how happy,
if you, one day, realized
it has always been me

how gay i would be

pushing away how
blissful it would be
for my twisted tongue to stop
like my two left feet

stumbling over pronouns

oh, how much easier it would be
to finally say *she*,
to finally allow this pen to bleed...

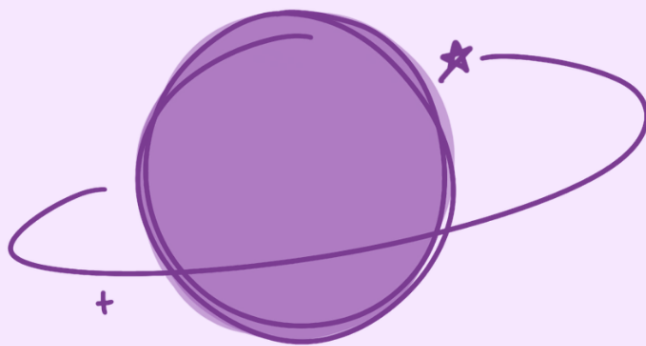
...at last, the rainbow i see

On the controversial
classification of the dwarf
planet known as

PLUTO

BY JAHYUN KIM

Born in Seoul, Korea before the invention of dial-up internet, Jahyun Kim (she/her) is a bi, 1.5 generation Korean-Canadian immigrant fascinated by the 'in-between' of not belonging on either side of hyphenated identities and attempting to create their own meaning in these undefined spaces. She worked as the editor for *PAST/TENSE*, an anthology published in collaboration with the students of GSWS306 and the GSWS department, and has recently completed her Bachelor of Arts in English.



After Pluto was discovered in 1930, it was declared to be the ninth planet from the Sun.

The pastor drones on, and my mind wanders. I sit very, very still and think about what I would be doing instead if I had my say over how I spent my Sunday morning. Sleep in, perhaps. Watch cartoons until they give way to talk shows.

Anything but going to church. The beige aluminum folding chairs are uncomfortable and squeak at the slightest of movements. I am trying exceptionally hard not to be caught not-praying. I don't know what would happen if I was caught, but I clasp my hands together desperately in imitation of everyone around me.

The girls in my Bible study class politely tolerate my presence, for the most part. They talk behind their hands, perfectly pious and pretty, and I pretend not to notice the corner of their lips turn up at my scuffed, dirty Payless shoes and thrift store jeans. I didn't realize I was poor until their pointed questions at things I didn't even know I was lacking. They would sit on the farthest end of the table away from me, as if it were a condition they could catch.

The only one that would sit next to me, either completely unconscious of or unaffected by this silent agreement to shun me was Nicole. It wasn't that we were friends. We never talked. She would often slouch in a few minutes late into the classroom, when she did decide to show up, always dressed in all black and eyes smudged with eyeliner, and take her seat by mine. She never had a Bible with her, peering over my shoulder quietly to follow along. I was fascinated by an oversized men's ring she would wear on her thumb, a shiny black band with silver Roman numerals engraved around it. I think I complimented her on it once, working up the nerve to say those few words over the course of two Sundays. She offered me a small, crooked smirk in return.

Sometimes, when I waited for my parents to finish their afternoon service, I would see Nicole come out from the woods ringing the edge of the church parking lot with her hood pulled up around her, walking quickly away with her hands stuffed in her pockets. There were always cigarette butts littering the surrounding dry grass and asphalt, despite everyone always giving up smoking for Lent.

Why I caught myself always searching for a glimpse of her, and could never quite name the feeling tangled around the lower rungs of my ribs. Whether it was envy or admiration, or something else entirely. I couldn't even tell you now. I was never taught to tell the difference.

Beginning in the 1990s, its status as a planet was questioned following the discovery of several objects of similar size in the Kuiper belt.

Hyun Woo's hands are clammy, but he grasps mine as if it were a lifeline. We sat quietly, stiffly in the dark of the theatre as a claymation skeleton juggled his skull on screen. He had put on a black button-up shirt for our first date, and bought us an extra-large bag of popcorn to share. I had butterflies in my stomach, and his thumb making small, nervous circles on my palms lingered in my mind for the next three weeks.

Nick nervously grips the gear shift in his right hand, laughing uncomfortably as he maneuvers his new car up the hill. The little hatchback stutters up the street, jostling and bumping our shoulders together. He would always walk me all the way to the front door after dates, an old-fashioned sort of quality I didn't know enough to appreciate then. He would stall for time before wishing me one final good night, as if he was searching for the right words to say. We never kissed. We fumbled at romance for a little while until I think he finally had enough of my indecisiveness.

Remi uses his accent to his advantage, drawing out his vowels and syllables *comme ça* to persuade me to stay just ten more minutes. I'll never forget how his eyes lit up the first time he saw the Pacific Ocean, the late August sun scattering freckles all over his skin. Any future-tense conversations would be nimbly sidestepped, carefully disguised as a preoccupation with the present. *Let's not ruin the moment. We're having fun now, aren't we?* He winks, tucking a strand of hair behind my ear. I let myself believe the summer would never end, spellbound by the perpetual present-tense of his words.

This led to the International Astronomical Union in 2006 to formally define the term 'planet', excluding Pluto and reclassifying it as a dwarf planet.

My confession sounds pathetic out loud. After years of hand-wringing, conjuring hypotheticals, and trying to divine glances and stray gestures, wishes, talking myself out of daydreams and coming just short of getting my palm read. *Or you could just tell her how you feel.*

After a long, heavy silence, she realizes what I'm trying to say. She doesn't pull her hand away, and I choose to take this as a sign of encouragement.

Her response picks up an old thread of conversation, pulling it taut around us. "You've only ever dated men before." The words come slowly, evenly, as if she had been thinking over them for a long time. "I don't want to be your experiment."

She pulls her hand away, gently. As quiet as her words were, they ring in my ear like a shot.

We tried to stay friends. We managed for a few more months than I gave us credit for.

A few years afterwards, I got a postcard from an address in Seoul. It asked how I was doing, conveying belated greetings for all the major holidays she had missed. How she meant to write sooner. The final lines read: *It seems like you're seeing someone now. I hope she makes you happy. I guess we could have made it work, after all.*

I absentmindedly run my fingers over the piercing that we had gotten together, all those Summers ago. It never healed cleanly and would always itch and swell when I would try to wear earrings in it. I eventually stopped trying and the hole closed itself up over time, leaving a tiny, bumpy scar where the piercing used to be.

Many questioned whether Pluto should be considered together or separately from other objects of similar volume in the Kuiper belt. Though reclassified by the IUA as a 'dwarf planet', members of the public have rejected this change, maintaining that they have always known Pluto as a planet and will continue to do so.

The small gold ring on my left hand is a protection charm. It guards against unfriendly, prying eyes and sharp, barbed phrases. It's an old, threadbare spell, but it manages to keep me out of sight for now.

He asks me every August if I want to go to Davie street. It's always on the hottest day of the year, the kind that closes in around you, long and lingering. I wave away the offer every time, as good-intentioned as it is, making excuses about the heat. Pride is a party for the protagonists, and I've haunted the sidelines for so long that I wouldn't know what to do with myself even if I were invited in. Besides, there's no place for ghosts at a celebration.

Pluto has yet to complete a full orbit around the Sun since its discovery, as one Plutonian year is 247.68 Earth years long.

what it's like
to be

questioning in

HIGH SCHOOL

BY ROSE WILKIN

Rose Wilkin (ze/hir/hirs) is a master's student in ecological restoration. Hir piece remembers what it's like to be questioning in high school while many of your friends do the same, discovering your identities side by side, but at different paces.



image description

A mixed media collage, with a white paper background and colourful string. Along the top are triangles of mint green paper with gold waves, and two prints of blue fairies on white paper. The fairies are wearing dresses and looking down at the rest of the piece. In the middle left and right are mint green cutouts with white and gold baby's breath flowers. On the bottom are black and white prints of leaves, mushrooms, and rabbits, and the mushrooms in the bottom right corner are upside-down. The mushrooms and some flowers are coloured in purple, pink, and blue. On the left is a purple fairy carrying a star. On the right is a fairy in teal, surrounded by tiny stars and carrying a wand with a star. The four prints of fairies are connected to each other by a rainbow made out of string. Along the bottom edge of the page is a strip of shiny rainbow tape.



LOST IN MODERN LESBOS

BY ALEX MASSE


Alex Masse (they/she) is a writer of fiction, poetry, and articles, whose words have been everywhere from the Vancouver Fringe Festival to the Scholastic Writing Awards Gold Keys. They're also a neurodivergent lesbian, which greatly affects their work. When not writing, Alex is probably either thinking about writing, making music, or cozied up with a good book.

I am Venus, spinning sideways.
I wonder if the stars above notice, and they do.
Like that, I am othered.

But my isolation is not infinite.
I find those in my boat,
Of queer fates and odd gaits.

I find my fellow femmes and grow wings,
Birds of a feather
When I hadn't even known my own until moments ago.

Lesbian history is a family photo album cracked with age
I see myself and my lovers
In the faces of strangers.



But I do not see myself today.
Not in these polished, saccharine sweethearts.
The ones who complain about looking “too straight.”

Yet again, my strangeness seals my fate.
I’m happy for them, but will I be seen as the femme I am,
Even if I don’t fit this modern mould?

I don’t have long hair I can braid flowers into
Makeup twists my reflection in a dazzling display of dysphoria
And no, I don’t listen to Girl in Red, she’s just not my genre.

I hear a femme complain about “masc lesbians”
As if GNC dykes don’t endanger themselves on the daily simply by being
Like they aren’t our sisters, lovers, mothers of this history.

I feel the otherness again,
Creeping up a body
That already felt so wrong.

And I can’t help but wonder,
Am I enough? Am I too much?
Is my type of pretty not up to snuff?

All I need is to be seen
By my sapphic family
Please, still have room for me.

putting my **CRAYONS**

in the proper order

BY ANITA SHEN

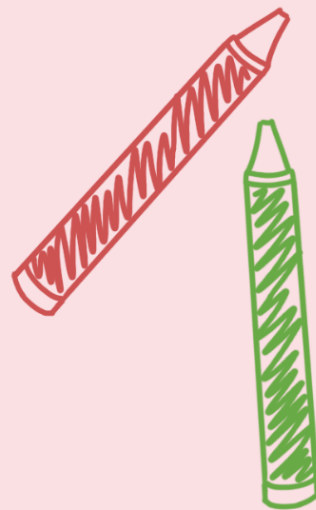
We won't start at white;
That's not the beginning
Doesn't feel right
to start with "let there be light"
holiness and sinning


To the colonizer, white is neutral,
Tabula rasa, Terra nullius
field of snow, bridal white, blank paper
perfect for tearing up and giving away

The colonizer loves beige, too
Offices and Karens swathed in plastic bandages
Wearing the wounds of neutrality with pride

Why don't we start with pink
So tender, fleshy, nude
Like a baby brain newly hatched
from the nest of womb
Little girls dressed like flowers
Bloom in sunshine and showers
with their busy bi bee friends
(And the hungry men follow)

When we met in the brothel, her hair was pink
she was my first queer hooker friend
Like Monet, she had bad vision, and she could see ultraviolet
We did a puzzle of his waterlilies in a hotel room
and planted flowers on her balcony for butterflies
Spoke softly and sadly about women we'd loved
laughed long and hard about men who'd hurt us






Next comes purple

A thick wool sweater from my mother – not worn, but rather
a musky pillow for dreaming
when I slept in caves and fields
napped in trucks and train stations
Thumb edging across highways and borders, bridges and mountains
There were no limits
I didn't look in a mirror for days or weeks at a time
To be homeless and bodiless
was to finally be free

Indigo w*ndigo
broken mysticism
dropping acid with hippies and painting our drug dealer's apartment
Do you wanna visit Roy G Biv?
The crows watch us in the dawning light
Urban rainforest birds that sparkle blue and purple
under ultraviolet, the scavengers
see how we eat ourselves up

Then the blues, which I know well:
Mediterranean blue, bruised breathless heart, goodbye in six languages
China blue, my ma smashing plates from her ma
Forget-me-not, 姥姥's favourite flower
Sky blue, a treat for when we die
Dyke denim, a heavenly hue
Baby blue, a gender reveal
My mother wanted a boy
She wished she was a boy
I wished I was a boy
But does blue bring us joy?
All boys do is bruise hearts (in six languages)

Green is rich and heavy,
Forest, army, olive, emerald
An overpass for wildlife
Wild baerlauch in the spring
Germany is fatherland, hikes,
Amazon parrots escaped from the Wilhelmina zoo
Nature is a luxury
Limes grown in a greenhouse



Now yellow, like dandelions, buttercups – weeds
We are yellow people
From our Yellow Emperor to our safflower skin
Gold from my aunt and gold from my mother
Don't worry who had to die
Or how hard we had to work
Here, these are the fruits of your heritage
No bitter, only sweet oil
for your hair and skin.
Now hide from the sun, lest you turn your true colour

I was born orange
My mother ate so many carrots,
I came out an Oompa-Loompa
(Not a boy, not a girl, but a clownish little immigrant)
But orange you glad
to be alive at all?

At the visible edge, here's red
The color spirits can see
The color that scares away bad luck
Some cold-blooded creatures use infrared
to find their prey
Bedbugs found me
in my apartment full of lanterns
left trails of red on sheets and skin
I bled, I bled
It didn't scare away bad luck

I always fell off the edge of Rainbow Road in Mario Kart
2SLGBTQIA+
There is no N or P or O in the acronym:
I get the garland of generic Queer,
a slip of shade under the umbrella of B or T,
or spill over into +

The rainbow only goes as far as we can see;
It lives in a specific place, where mist and sun refract
Like sundogs, a strange mirage.
The pot of gold a curse, a fairy trick;
Tricksters laugh as we fall for it, and fall, and fall
2SLGBTQIA+

Then beautiful brown,
then black.

LEVEL COMPLETE

PLAY AGAIN?

NEW HIGH SCORE: 2021

GET IN TOUCH!



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sfuwerehere@gmail.com



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did you love it? hate it?
we want to know! let us
know what you think about
the zine by filling in
our feedback form →



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